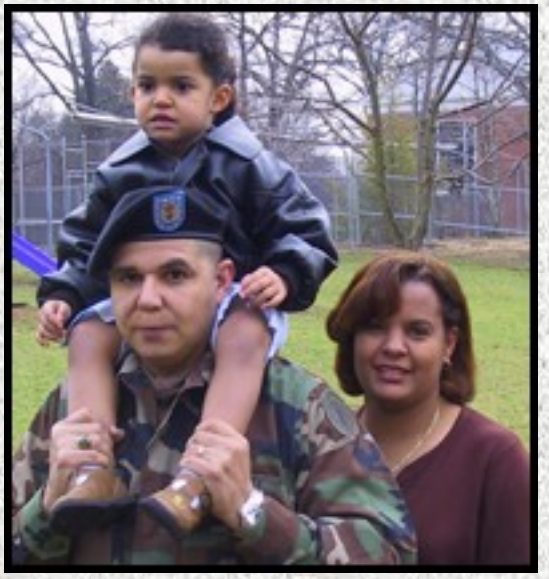
# Army Family Action Plan

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living

# Today's Army Family

## The greatest challenge in the 21st Century is "Work-Life Balance"



- **Dual careers – 51% of spouses employed**
  - ✓ Emerging social trends; changing demographics
- **Higher aspirations and expectations**
  - ✓ Higher standard of living
- **Better educated and informed**
  - ✓ Through improved technology/Internet
- **Increasing demands**
  - ✓ Child care, youth programs, community services,

# What Keeps AFAP Relevant?

- AFAP

  … the Army's primary tool to communicate to leaders issues of importance to Soldiers, Retirees, family members and DA civilians.

  … the "people's perspective" of adjustments and improvements that will increase recruitment, retention, and work-life satisfaction.

- AFAP

  … addresses the demands of Army life by identifying quality of life "hot spots" as the Army undergoes transformation and fights the Global War on Terrorism.

- AFAP

  … demonstrates that Army leaders care about the people who make up the Army Family.

# AFAP EVOLVES

- **SPOUSE ACTION GROUPS**
- **ARSTAF ACTIONS**
- **NATIONAL SYMPOSIA, 80, 81, 82**
- **1st AFAP CONFERENCE JUL 83**

***Chief of Staff U.S. Army***

***WHITE PAPER 1983***

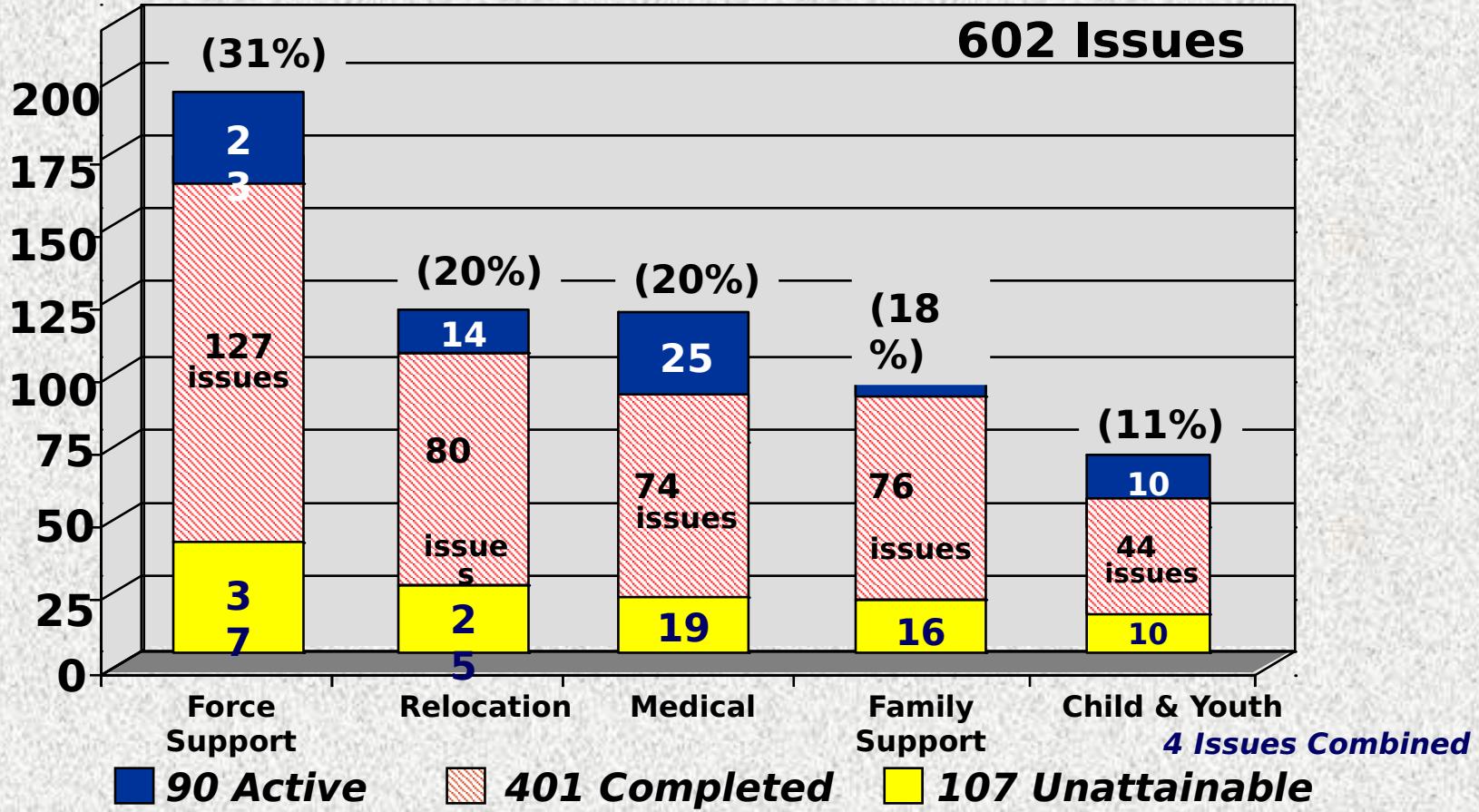
***"THE ARMY FAMILY"***

**FIRST ARMY FAMILY ACTION**

**PLAN Pamphlet 1984**

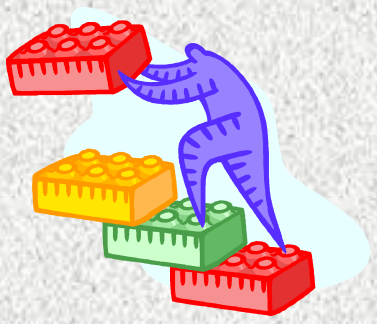
**AR 608-47 revised in Dec 04**

# Status of AFAP Issues 1983-2005

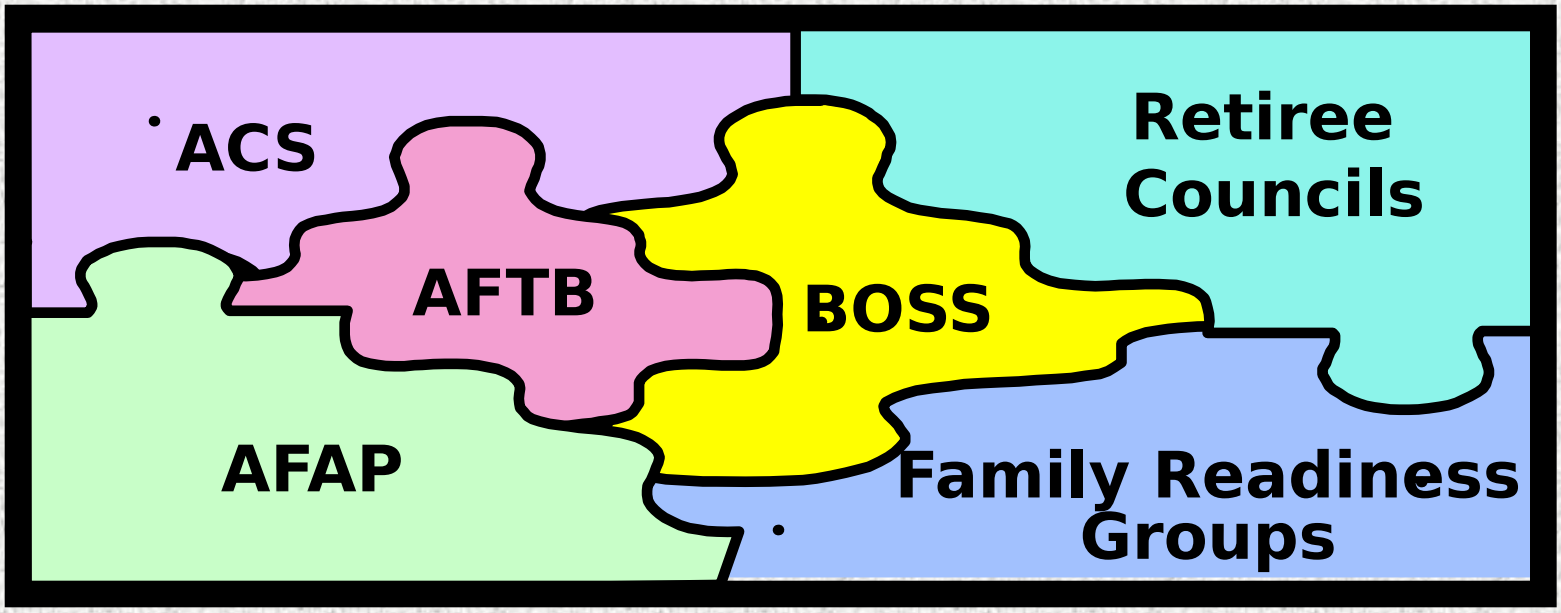



98 Legislative changes
141 DoD or Army policy/regulatory changes
162 Improved programs or services/funding

# Diversity of AFAP Issues

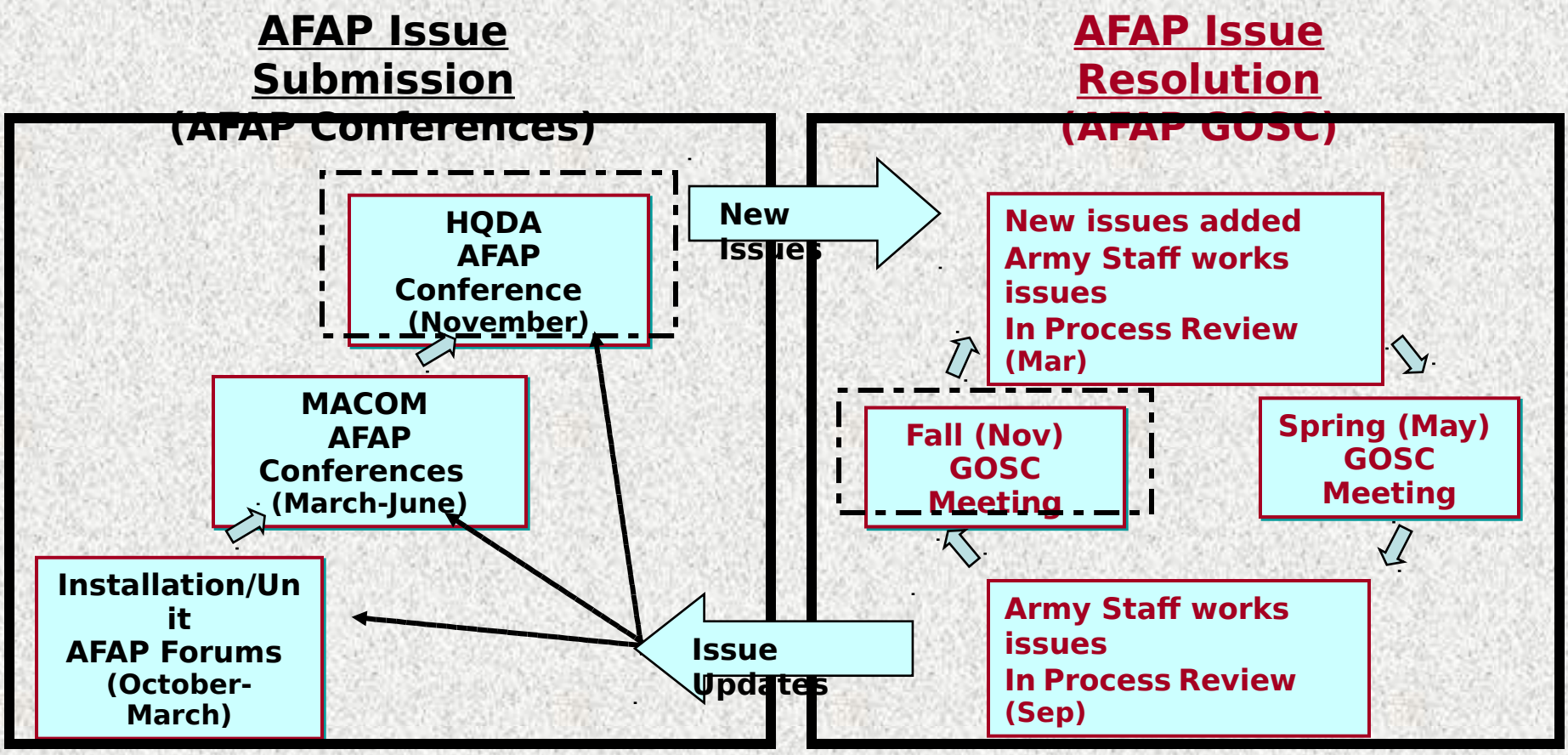


- ***High visibility/wide impact***
  - ✓ **TRICARE for Life – *Issue 402***
  - ✓ **Military Pay Table Reform – *Issue 461***
  - ✓ **Distribution of MGIB Benefits for Dependents – *Issue 497* (active issue)**
- ***Low cost issues with a high quality of life return***
  - ✓ **Online (AKO) Access to DEERS Data – *Issue 496***
  - ✓ **Access to Installations for Family Care Plan Providers – *Issue 519***
  - ✓ **Creation of Family Readiness Groups – *Issue 74***
- ***Timely/relevant***
  - ✓ **Wounded Soldier Updates – *Issue 595* (active issue)**
  - ✓ **Expansion of eArmyU – *Issue 561***
  - ✓ **Extended Time for Surviving Spouses Educational Benefits – *Issue 542***
- ***Issues that create parallels to civilian standards of living***
  - ✓ **Re-engineering of Household Goods Program – *Issue 307* (active issue)**
  - ✓ **Audio/Video Surveillance in Childcare Centers – *Issue 447* (active issue)**
  - ✓ **Paternity Leave – *Issue 578* (active issue)**




**Soldiers & Families, influencing Army Standards of Living**

# AFAP: Two Processes Working in Tandem

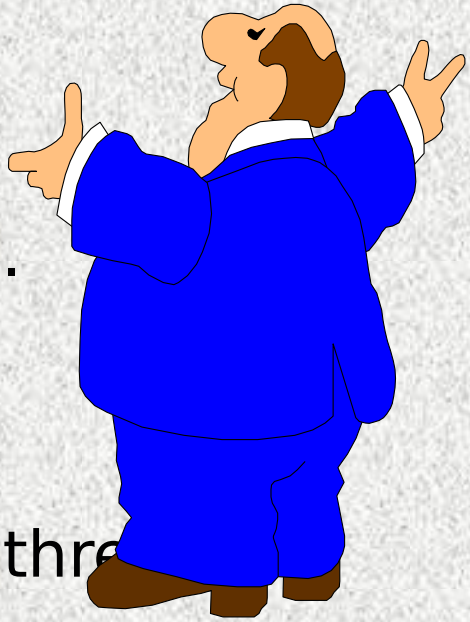

AFAP Issue Submission (AFAP Conferences)
HQDA AFAP Conference (November)
MACOM AFAP Conferences (March-June)
Installation/Unit AFAP Forums (October-March)
New Issues
Issue Updates
AFAP Issue Resolution (AFAP GOSC)
New issues added Army Staff works issues In Process Review (Mar)
Fall (Nov) GOSC Meeting
Spring (May) GOSC Meeting
Army Staff works issues In Process Review (Sep)

# AFAP Conference Objectives

- Work groups, representative of Army demographics, will select specific, clearly articulated issues that impact well-being.
- Delegates will formulate recommendations to solve these issues.
- Delegates will identify most critical issues in the AFAP.
- Delegates will provide conference results to the Commander at end of conference.
- AFAP Staff will distribute conference results.
- AFAP Staff retain command-specific issues and forward issues with Army-wide impact to HQDA.

# AFAP Issue Criteria

- Issue has broad impact and is within the purview of USASOC, HQDA or DoD to influence.
- Issue is attainable after considering current political and resource environment.
- Issue has a measurable objective with an identified end product.
- Issue does not duplicate an active HQDA AFAP issue or an issue that has been addressed in the past three years.



# AFAP Issue Development

Title

Scope

Recommendations

**Pay attention and you will get an issue that you can “work”!**

# Title

- **Summarizes the issue.**
- **Is short -- but not so short that the content is not defined.**
- **Is <u>not</u> a sentence – and contains no verbs**
- **Doesn't place a "value" on the subject.**

Consider writing the title last!

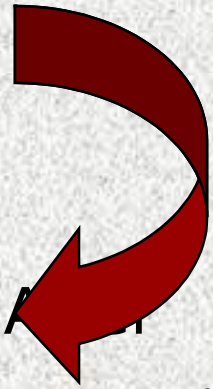
# Title

**What's wrong (or right) with these?**

Leave Policy

Uniquely High Costs and Lack of Military Infrastructure in Miami

Stabilization between Deployments



Stabilization from Major Training Exercises A[illegible] Deployment

# Scope

At least **3** sentences:
**what's** the problem,
**how** & **whom** it affects,
**why** it's a problem!

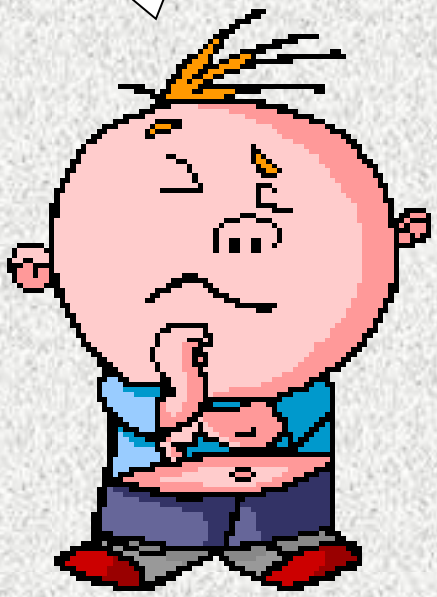
A paragraph with at least 3 sentences:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Validation – facts or information
3. Impact – why it's important

Is understandable to an outsider.

Identifies <u>one</u> valid problem.

**Is NEVER one sentence long!**



# Common “Scope” Errors

**Not validating or over-exaggerating the “statement of the problem” (first sentence).**

“A large number of honorably discharged veterans cannot afford Veterans
Group Life Insurance (VGLI) premiums.”
“The Army has a vision readiness problem.”

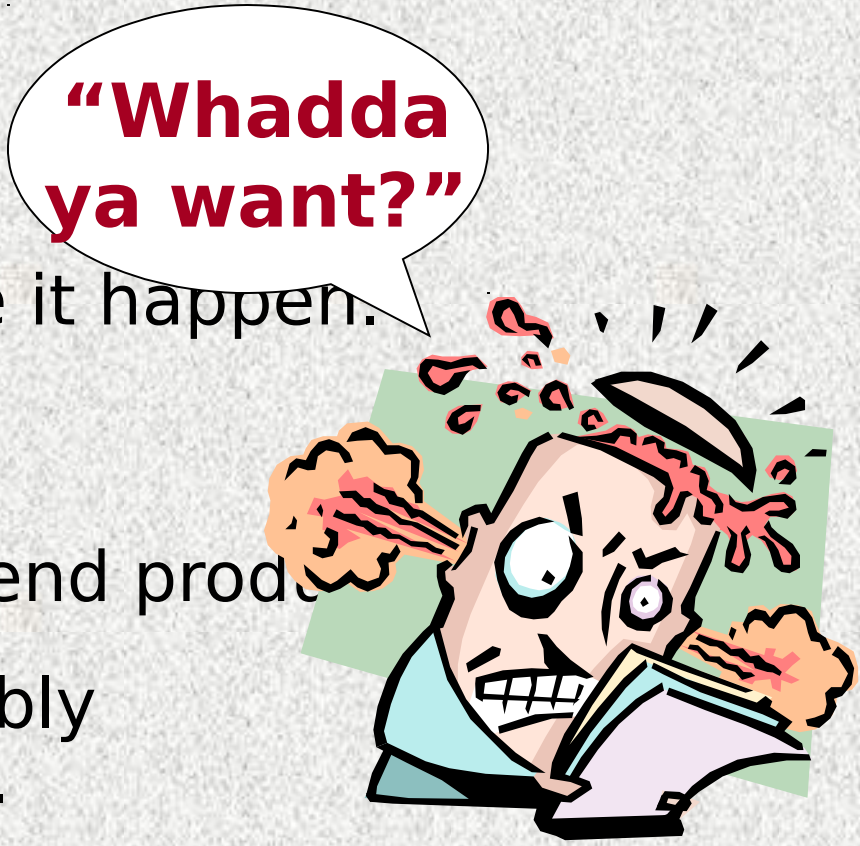
**Assuming the reader knows what you know.**

“The dependency determination application process is cumbersome and unresponsive to the needs of Soldiers. There is a lack of guidance on submission procedures and no visibility of packet status through completion. …”

**Having good sentences, but in the wrong order.**

“Programs available to pregnant Soldiers are inadequate and inconsistent. A limited number of installations offer educational and physical fitness training programs for pregnant and postpartum Soldiers and participation is not mandatory. …”

# Recommendations




- Tell <u>what</u> you want – not how to make it happen.
- Start with a strong, descriptive verb and end with a measurable end prod
- Prioritize! Three (preferably fewer) recommendations.
- Consider writing the recommendation first.

***Explanations belong in the Scope.***

# Recommendations

Tell what you want with conviction.
Don't explain "how to do it" or "why its important"!

- DoD should develop and promulgate a policy that provides protection from identity theft for all ID Card holders. (*"Should"? What is the end product you want?*)
- Relook barracks occupancy calculation. (*What do you want?*)
- Amend Title 5, United States Code, Subsection 890,4 to add dental and vision coverage benefit options. (Say what you want, not how to do it.)
- Allow RC service members to defer the existing mortgage payment on the family's primary residence in excess of the Basic Allowance for Housing for the duration of mobilization and/or deployment. (*Clearly identifies the end product*)

***Always think end product – what will be the result.***

# The Workgroup Team

Delegates

Facilitators

Issue Support

Recorders & Transcribers

Observers & Administrative Staff

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

# Delegate

**Role**

Representative of the whole

Decision maker

**Techniques**

Respect other positions and opinions

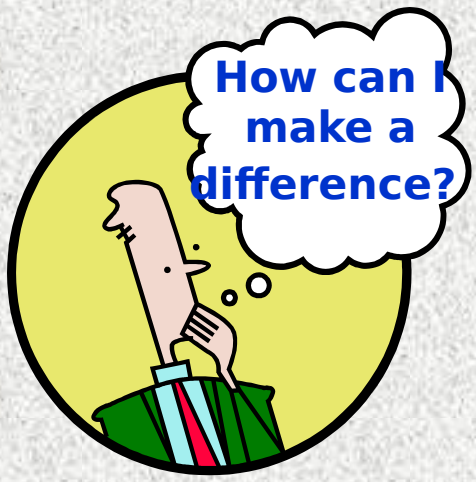
Listen

Remain objective - keep an open mind

No wrong opinions

**Avoids**

Being negative or defensive



# Facilitator

**Role**

Keep the group on track

Adhere to ground rules

**Techniques**

Enforce ground rules

Ask helpful questions

**Avoids**

Evaluating or contributing ideas

# Recorder

**Role**

Group memory
Capture group ideas

**Techniques**

Write key words and basic ideas
Large print (2 inch minimum) / use colors

**Avoids**

Contributing own ideas
Writing down every word
Focusing on the spelling

***Pens do not come with spell check!***

# Transcriber

## Role

- Transcribe the discussions
- Complete final issue papers
- Prepare report out slides

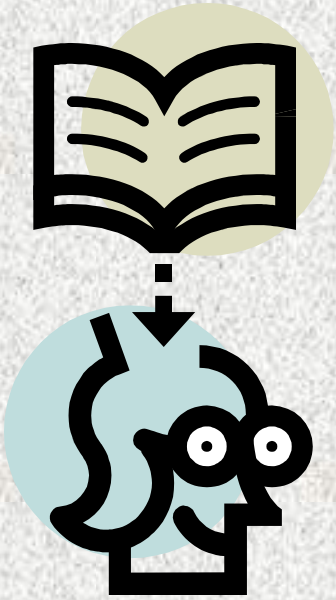
## Techniques

- Use templates provided for final products
- Uses laptop and projection for issue development

## Avoids

- Contributing own ideas

# Issue Support



**Role**

Screen issues for proper format
Make wording suggestions
Research issue information

**Techniques**

Use Issue Development Checklist

**Avoids**

Contributing own ideas
Writing the issue alone

# Subject Matter Expert

**Role**

Provide factual information

**Techniques**

Suggest alternative approaches

Be open to ideas from delegates

**Avoids**

Being defensive or negative

Saying “It’s being done”

# Helpful Hints for SMEs

**How do I help?**

Provide information (Know when you “don’t know”)

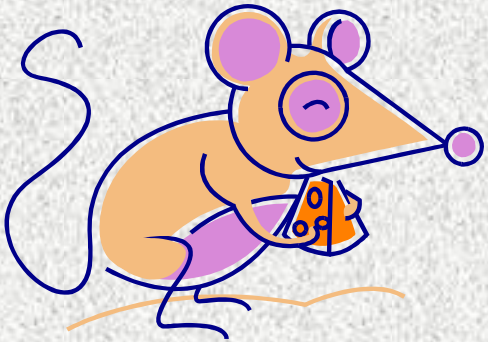
**How can I do that?**

Remain positive and helpful
Suggest alternative approaches
Be open to ideas

**What should I avoid?**

Dictating -- role is to *advise*
Being defensive or negative
Trying to “beat the system” -- volunteering to work the issue “off line”, saying it’s “being done”

# Observer



**Role**

Observe

**Techniques**

Quiet as a mouse

**Avoids**

Using body language

Noisy entrances and exits

# The Out Brief

**Each Workgroup**

Selects a spokesperson

**The Spokesperson**

Introduces the group

Highlights the group's issues

**Delegates**

Vote on Top 5 Issues

# What happens next?

After the conference, the VCSA must approve all conference results.

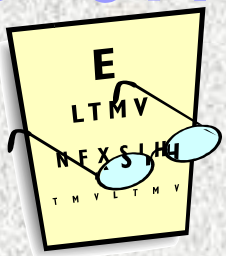
Following VCSA approval, the Director of the Army Staff (DAS) assigns the “new issues” to the Army Staff and tasks them to develop an action plan and report progress to resolve the issue

Every six months, the issue paper and slide are submitted electronically to CFSC and the action officer attends an AFAP In Process Review (IPR) to brief the action plan and progress to resolve the issue.  This cycle continues until the recommendations are achieved or determined unachievable.

Every six months, 25 issues are selected to be briefed to Army leadership via the AFAP General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC).  The only way an issue can be closed from the AFAP is with the concurrence of the AFAP GOSC.

***The Top Five Issues from the Nov 06 AFAP Conference***

# AFAP Success Stories



## Benefits & Allowances

2001 Military Savings Plan

2002 Auth DLA for first PCS

2003 Service Members' Civil Relief Act

2004 Privatization of Family Housing

2005 55% SBP benefit phase in for over 62 annuitants

## Medical & Dental

2001 TRICARE for Life

2001 Elimination of TRICARE co-pay for AD families

2002 TRICARE Referrals &

2004

2005

## Youth Initiatives

2000

2001

2004

## Force Support

Auth Pr

Chiropractic Care for

AD/RC annual vision

Enlisted Assignment Preference

Improved Personnel/Deployment Tempo

Frequent review of PCS weight allowance

2002

2003

2004

# Questions ??